



Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer

Contact Susan McNabb, Volunteer Coordinator at 209-8068 or e-mail at susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov Summer 2007

Emergency Preparedness is Everybody's Business

A recent survey sponsored by the American Public Health Association (APHA) indicates that about a third of Americans have made no preparations for a public health emergency, and nearly 90% have prepared less than they think they should.

Emergency preparedness is a recently realized priority in urban and rural areas across our country. This survey sponsored by the APHA indicates that public health officials have a long way to go to prepare the nation for a public health emergency. An ice storm, severe weather outbreak or a disease outbreak will disrupt basic services such as electricity, water and the ability to purchase necessary medications. A public health crisis is not foremost for the majority of people, but being prepared for such emergencies is everybody's business.

The APHA survey was conducted on-line and polled several groups which included mothers with children younger than 5, hourly wage workers, and adults with chronic medical conditions. The survey also polled employers and school superintendents as well as regional food

bank administrators and local soup kitchen managers. Among the key findings about emergency preparedness for individuals and the community were:

32% of the public have not taken steps to prepare for an emergency that would leave them short of food, water and medications.

87% said they knew they had not done enough to prepare for an emergency.

40% said they had taken steps to prepare in the past, but had let their plans lapse.

27% said they were prepared for an emergency but only 14% of this group had enough food, water and medication for 3 days.

46% had not assembled a disaster supply kit.

37% of employers stated that a public health crisis would affect their business.

Only 18% of the employers said they could continue paying their employees if business operations were interrupted.

School administrators re-

ported a high level of preparedness, but they did not have enough food or water to last students for 3 days.

Regional food banks and soup kitchens reported that they were not prepared for a large increase in need by the general public.

All groups surveyed said that cost was a major barrier to their preparedness efforts.

How can we apply these survey results? On a personal level, we need to know how to care for our homes and families. In the event of a major storm or other incident which disrupts basic services, emergency responders may not be able to reach individual homes for two to three days. Each household should keep enough water, food and medications along with a means of communicating with the outside world for those crucial first 72 hours. Being prepared will help eliminate confusion and fear during an emergency. Be responsible, be prepared!

For a complete report on the APHA survey, visit their website at www.apha.org. For more information about how to prepare for an emergency, visit www.ready.gov.

Physician Volunteers Call-up Tested

The Physician Volunteer section of our Volunteer Program was tested recently as a part of the Homeland Security District 3 Full Scale Exercise on March 31, 2007. Volunteer physicians received a surprise emergency phone call with these instructions: THIS IS A DRILL. Please respond to verify your availability if this were a real emergency. THIS IS A DRILL. Sixty percent of our more than 50 volunteer phy-

sicians were tested with the response rate being 74%.

The pre-selected 34 physicians started receiving the test emergency notification at 11:00 on Saturday, March 31st, and the test ended at 1:00. By 11:30, twenty-four physicians had responded, and by 11:45 the remaining of the 74% had responded. We feel confident that, within an hour of any major disaster, our physician volunteers will have reported to a staging area for their emergency assignment.

The process of calling up physicians began with entering their contact information into the Hamilton County Rapid Emergency Notification System. This notification system can use several forms to contact individuals. For our test, we used home phone numbers and

cell phone numbers.

Any physician who is interested in becoming a part of our medical response in an emergency can fill out a registration form on-line. Visit our website at <http://health.hamiltontn.org>. Look under Community Issues and see the Physician Volunteer Program. Click on this and you will find more information about the program, plus a link to access the registration form. Once the form is completed, click on the submit button and the registration form will automatically be submitted. If you have any questions, please call Susan McNabb at 209-8068.

IN THIS ISSUE	
• Emergency Preparedness	1
• Physician Volunteers Tested	1
• Emergency Cell Phone Facts	2
• Training Opportunities	2
• Information Update	2

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CHCHD Public Health Emergency Preparedness Informer

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Emergency Cell Phone Facts

Knowing what to do in emergency situations may make the difference between life and death. Your mobile phone can actually be an emergency tool for survival. Check out these nifty things that you can do with it:

The Emergency Number world wide for mobile is 112. If you find yourself out of the coverage area of your mobile network and there is an emergency, dial 112 and the mobile will search any of the existing network to establish the emergency number for you. Interestingly, this number (112) can be dialed even if the keypad is locked.

Disable a Stolen Mobile Phone. To check your mobile phone's serial number, key in the following digits on your phone: *#06#. A 15 digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe. If your phone is stolen, call your service provider and give them this code. They will then be able to block your handset so even if the thief changes the SIM card, your phone will be totally useless.

Locked Keys in your car? Does your car have a remote keyless entry? If your spare keys are at home, call someone at your home on their cell phone from your cell phone. Hold your cell phone about a foot from your car door and have the person at home press the unlock button while holding it near the mobile phone on their end. Your car will unlock. Distance is no object. You could be hundreds of miles away, and if you can reach someone who has the other "remote" you can unlock the doors.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department will host volunteer training sessions in the upcoming months on the topics listed below. As a part of the Medical Reserve Corps Program and part of the Surgeon General's Community Initiatives, we not only respond to a public health emergency, but we are also a part of the community education plan.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>
June 28, 2007	5:30—6:30	Pandemic Influenza Preparedness	Dawn Ford, Emergency Response Coordinator for the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department
August 2, 2007	5:30—6:30	Mass Shelter Training	American Red Cross Speaker

Please RSVP (so we will have a head count for space and food) to Susan McNabb, 209-8068, or e-mail at susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov.

The Health Department is located on Third Street next to Erlanger. Hampton Street runs between Erlanger and the Health Department. Park in the garage located on Hampton Street behind the Health Department building. Follow the signs once you exit the elevator on the first floor. Bring your parking ticket with you to be stamped for \$1.00 parking.

Volunteer Information Update

If you have moved, changed telephone numbers, or are no longer interested in being a volunteer, please complete the form below and return to the address at the top of this page or e-mail Susan McNabb at susanm@mail.hamiltontn.gov.

Name _____ Home Phone _____ Cell _____ Work Phone _____
Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Work Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Email _____

_____ I am unable to be a volunteer at this time. Please remove my name from the active volunteer list.